

Psalm 119

week 3, v.84-88

Are the words, ' how long will it take' familiar? How about ' are we there yet' ? When are these phrases used?

These phrases are used when there is anticipation for something to happen. Either you want something to end or to begin. In Psalm 119:84, we read two questions that David is asking. He is anticipating a change.

Ps 119:84 How many are the days of Thy servant? When wilt Thou execute judgment on those who persecute me?

Remember what we read in the verse previous to this one? The Psalmist is tired, he feels like he has nothing left, no strength to continue. But, he resolves to take heart in God' s word and through that encouragement, he hangs on.

Now, in verse 84, he asks God how long he will have to hang on, to endure this life.

Ps 39:4 " LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the extent of my days, Let me know how transient I am.

When life seems especially difficult, do we take comfort in focusing on what lies ahead when we are called from this earth? This would be the positive take on this verse. We may also see impatience from the Psalmist in this scripture. Think! Is this verse something for you to follow or avoid? Do we really want to know the number of our days? How would it change things if we did? Should we not be living as if today is our last breath?

In Psalm 39:4 which was read earlier, the word transient is used as a description of our time on earth. (NASB) It' s the implication of being here a very short time, ' here today gone tomorrow' . If you speak to those who have had major upsets in their lives such as serious illness, unexpected death, or traumatic change, often a sense of appreciating each day is heightened. The reality that our time can end or change without much notice causes an increased gratitude for today. Let' s take this example and make the most of the time we have whilst focusing on the prize ahead.

Notice that the Psalmist refers to himself as God' s servant. What does this say about David? Who is in control? Are you surrendered to God and His will for your life? Do we recognize that our life is not ours? How is our attitude affected when we realize we are not living for ourselves and our personal accomplishments, agendas, fulfillment?

The last part of Ps 119:84 states, ' when wilt Thou execute judgment on those who persecute me?' There is no question to God' s final judgment of those who are against Him. So even in David' s state of weariness he shows a confidence in God' s righteousness. How does your confidence in God carry you through rough times?

Have you ever felt like a great number of people were against you? How difficult is it to constantly ' go against the flow' ? To be different, to stand out, and to put themselves on the line – this is what the followers of God were asked to do.

Ps 119:85 The arrogant have dug pits for me, [Men] who are not in accord with Thy law.

Describe someone who is arrogant. This word means proud or presumptuous. This is someone who boldly assumes self-importance. When a person desires to feel more important than they are, what actions do they take towards those who threaten their position? Don' t we find ways to knock someone else down?

David says that those who are against God are plotting against him.

Pr 16:27 A worthless man digs up evil , while his words are as a scorching fire.

' A worthless man' describes one who is ungodly. What does he use to cause trouble? His words.

They were spiteful: They dug pits for him, which intimates that they were deliberate in their designs against him and that what they did was of malice prepense; it intimates likewise that they were subtle and crafty, and had the serpent' s head as well as the serpent' s venom, that they were industrious and would refuse no pains to do him a mischief, and treacherous, laying snares in secret for him, as hunters do take wild beasts, Ps 35:7. Such has been the enmity of the serpent' s seed to the seed of the woman. Matthew Henry' s Commentary

This metaphor is taken from the mode in which wild beasts are caught in the East: deep pits are dug in the earth, and slightly covered over with reeds, turf, etc., so as not to be discerned from the solid ground; and the animals attempting to walk over them, the surface breaks, they fall in, and are taken alive. Thus the Psalmist' s enemies employed craft as well as power in order to effect his ruin. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

How does the Psalmist respond to his dire state?

Ps 119:86-87 All Thy commandments are faithful ; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me! 87 They almost destroyed me on earth, but as for me, I did not forsake Thy precepts.

He looks to God' s *faithfulness*. He prays for His help and *protection*. He stays true to God' s word.

God' s faithfulness:

He is perfectly just and 100% Truth *all the time, in every situation*. Faithfulness is part of God' s character and His faithfulness has no end and knows no bounds.

1Th 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

La 3:22-23 The LORD' S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 [They] are new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness.

2Ti 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

Ps 36:5 Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Thy faithfulness [reaches] to the skies.

Ps 119:90 Thy faithfulness [continues] throughout all generations; Thou didst establish the earth, and it stands.

Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

De 7:9 " Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

God' s help and protection:

1Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

2Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil [one.]

De 31:6 " Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. "

De 20:4 for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. '

Isa 41:10 ' Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. '

Ps 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

This section of eight verses ends with the Psalmist looking to God for his source of strength and hope.

Ps 119:88 Revive me according to Thy lovingkindness, So that I may keep the testimony of Thy mouth.

The word revive is translated 'quicken' in the KJV. It is the idea of giving new energy to something that has lost its momentum.

Think of how you feel when you are about to begin a new project you have been planning. You're excited to get started, you have envisioned what the outcome will be and you are willing to work tirelessly to complete it. Then..... you hit a difficult turn, something unexpected, or the project takes a lot more energy or time than you had anticipated. You kind of lose your steam and your urgency to complete what you started. **How do you get back on track?**

You focus on the purpose, on the reason you began. David desires for God's tender encouragement so that he could continue to act in obedience. This section of eight verses began with the Psalmist feeling weak but focusing on the hope found in God's word. It ends with a continued focus to keep God's testimonies.

Do we realize, as David did, that we constantly need God's assistance in order to stay the course?

Do we understand our total dependence on God for everything? We need His strength so that any good might come out of our best efforts.

Do we appeal to God to help us so that we might follow our own desires or so that we continue to follow His plan for us?

What is God's lovingkindness?

Lovingkindness <checked> kindness, favor, mercy

Ps 36:7 How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings.

Ps 69:16 Answer me, O LORD, for Thy lovingkindness is good; according to the greatness of Thy compassion, turn to me,

Ps 17:7 Wondrously show Thy lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Thy right hand From those who rise up [against them].

Ps 63:3 Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee.

Ps 40:11 Thou, O LORD, wilt not withhold Thy compassion from me; Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth will continually preserve me.

Isa 54:10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the LORD who has compassion on you.

How often do you take the time to consider God' s lovingkindness in your life? Do you recognize His hand in anything good you might accomplish?

Why does David request to be renewed according to God' s lovingkindness?

So that he might continue on with his witness for God. Think about the requests we make of God. What is our purpose in those requests? What do we live for?

Application Questions

In this section of scripture we are reminded that our time on earth is short. Are you focused on making the most of each day for yourself or for God? Where would God have you invest the time He' s giving you?

In verse 84, we read David describing himself as God' s servant. This acknowledges his realization that God is in control. Would you describe yourself as God' s servant? How would your schedule back up your claim?

Read Psalms 119:85-87. What is our example in these verses? How are we to respond to adversity from others?

What does it mean to say God is faithful?

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Lamentations 3:22-23

2 Timothy 2:13

Will God help and protect you?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Deuteronomy 31:6

Isaiah 41:10

Psalms 119:88 gives us the assurance that we are able to continue our faithfulness to God in all circumstances. He will give us the ability to keep on keeping on. Our Psalmist knew he needed God's assistance continuously; he understood his total dependence on God for everything. He also knew God would answer him with His lovingkindness.

How has God shown His lovingkindness or mercy towards you lately? Has he answered prayer (Psalm 69:16)? Has he protected you (Psalm 36:7)? Has he held you up when you were weak (Ps 40:11)?

How would God have you respond to His word? What has God put on your heart?